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Recent Discussions respecting the Lord's Supper.[1]

PROF. J. HENRY THAYER.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE two simple ceremonies which have been included in its ritual by the Christian church of all branches and in all ages, viz. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, have occasioned, as we know, deplorable strife, particularly since the Reformation. In the case of the second ordinance — the Eucharist (to call it by its earliest extra-biblical name) — disagreement is perhaps not surprising, when we consider the startling boldness of the terms employed by our Lord on its first observance. Nevertheless, through all their heated controversy about its significance, and efficacy, and administration, the churches until lately have concurred in holding it to be the most central and sacred observance in their order of worship. But the recent discussions have gone further, and raised questions not only

[1] This article is a portion of the annual address which was delivered before the Harvard Divinity School at the opening of the academic year, Sept. 29, 1899. The discussions to which it refers are mostly to be found in sundry pamphlets and serial publications that have appeared since the first issue of Weizsäcker's *Apostolisches Zeitalter* in 1886. The more noteworthy are the following: Harnack, "Brod und Wasser," u. s. w., in *Texte und Untersuchungen* vii. 2 (1891), pp. 117–144; Zahn, *Brot und Wein* u. s. w. (1892), pp. 32; Jülicher in *Theol. Abhandlungen . . . Weizsäcker . . . gewidmet*, 1892, pp. 217–250; Spitta, *Zur Geschichte und Litteratur des Urchristenthums*, Bd. i. (1893), pp. 207–337; Grafe in *Zeitschrift f. Theol. u. Kirche* v. 2 (1895), pp. 101–138; F. Schultzen, *Das Abendmahl im neuen Testament*, pp. 112 (1895); R. A. Hoffmann, *Die Abendmahlsgedanken Jesu Christi*, pp. 151 (1896); O. Holtzheuer, *Das Abendmahl und die neuere Kritik*, pp. 74 (1896); A. Eichhorn, *Das Abendmahl im Neuen Testament*, and C. Clemen, *Der Ursprung des heiligen Abendmahls*, forming Hefte 36 and 37 of the *Christliche Welt* (Leipz., 1898); Schmiedel in the *Protestantische Monatshefte*, dritter Jahrgang, Heft 4 (1899), pp. 125–153. A previous article by Professor Schmiedel in the *Protestant. Kirchenzeitung* for 1896, and an essay by Professor Haupt, *Die ursprüngliche Form und Bedeutung der Abendmahlsworte*, Halle, 1894, have not been accessible to me.

respecting the meaning of the extant accounts of it, but doubts about the origin of the rite itself.

I. Some of the opinions which have been broached on the subject let us briefly pass in review:

1. One class of objectors exempt themselves from examining the delicate questions involved in the fragmentary records, by dismissing these records as unhistorical, on general and *a priori* grounds. They remind us that throughout his ministry Jesus was hampered by the current Pharisaic formalism, which had emptied rites of their meaning and caused the dead body to be mistaken for the animating spirit.

Now, it is extremely improbable — say these theoretical objectors — that Jesus, with his knowledge of human nature, his prescience, and especially his experience of the paralyzing effect of dead external observances, should himself have instituted a rite which (as history shows) would certainly entail upon his followers similar pernicious consequences.

When it is replied that this argument proves too much, for it invalidates the rite of baptism also, its advocates unflinchingly accept the inference, and allege that the opinion that Christian baptism originated with Christ is very questionable. And they fortify their scepticism in this latter case by reminding us that the injunction to make disciples and baptize them into the threefold name occurs in the concluding paragraph of Matthew's Gospel which, as it stands, is confessedly rather a summary of early belief and practice than an exact report of the Master's words; that the similar declaration ascribed to him at the end of Mark — viz. 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' — is contained, not in the original Gospel, but in the appendix attached to it apparently by Aristion in the second century; that the Fourth Gospel tells us expressly that Jesus himself did not baptize, and gives us the impression that the rite was brought over into the circle of his followers by those who had previously been adherents of the Baptist; that the two representative apostles, Peter and Paul, both incidentally appear to slight the ordinance: the former, when in the case of Cornelius and his friends at Caesarea he simply "commanded them to be baptized"; and Paul, more explicitly, when, in writing to the Corinthians, after admitting that he personally baptized a few of the converts among them (how many he does not remember), adds, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

2. A second objection to the Eucharistic usage as having originated with Christ, is thought to be found in the fact that the Fourth Gospel,

although giving an account of what appears to be his last meal with the Twelve, makes no mention of the rite.[2] This, it is contended, is incredible had Jesus at that time solemnly instituted a ceremony which he designed to be sacred, universal, perpetual, among his followers.[3]

3. Again, it is urged that to refer the origin of the rite to Christ is a prolepsis — it overruns and antedates history. For it assumes that he had a sure foreknowledge, not only of the fact, and time, and mode of his death, but also of the loyalty of his followers, their formal organization in his name, and their world-wide propagation of his tenets.

Now he had already learned, more than once, that those who seemed to have attached themselves to him would easily take offence and desert him; and as a matter of fact, on his arrest, his most trusted disciples forsook him. The distinct and repeated predictions of his fate which the evangelists ascribe to him are later insertions, therefore, or clarified amplifications of dim forebodings, as is proved by the hopelessness in which the event plunged the disciples when it came, and the explicit confessions of the two on the way to Emmaus which have been preserved for us in the Gospel of Luke.

4. Further, the rite as it is described to us involves a conception of the person and work of Jesus which belongs to the later theologies of Paul and John; a conception which would have been incomprehensible to the Twelve at the time, and which cannot be harmonized with the sketch of him as an itinerant preacher of righteousness and the coming kingdom, which is given us in the Synoptic Gospels.

5. Moreover, it is alleged that the Biblical accounts of the ordinance — especially the most extended as found in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians — contain incongruities and inconsistencies which are perplexing:

a. "As they were eating, he took bread and . . . brake it and gave to them and said, Take ye: this is my body" (Mk. 14^{22}). But the body of Jesus was not 'broken': "when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs" (Jn. 19^{33}) . . . that the scripture might be fulfilled "a bone of him shall not be broken" (vs.^{36}).

b. "And he took a cup and . . . gave to them, saying, Drink ye of it, all" (cf. Mt. 26^{27}).

[2] What may be said in explanation of this apparently strange omission — as well as in reply to the preceding objection and to those that are to follow — let me hold in reserve till the case is more fully before us.

[3] Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, 14th ed., p. 401.

Now, sacrificial blood was put to various ritual uses, but was never drunk; nay, the law expressly restricted its use to "the altar," and declared that, 'whoever, be he Israelite or stranger, eateth it, shall be cut off.' Lev. 17^{10-14} (cf. Gen. 9^{4} Lev. 3^{17} $7^{26\,f.}$ 19^{26} Deut. $12^{16.\,23}$ 15^{23}). Appropriately enough, therefore, does the writer to the Hebrews (12^{24}) call it "the blood of sprinkling"; and, again, Peter (1 Pet. 1^{2}) describes Christians as 'elect . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.'

c. According to the Synoptists, the meal in connection with which the ceremony took place was a Passover meal. Now, as bread and wine — ordinary articles of food — have, in themselves and apart from the circumstances of the case, no symbolic significance, that significance (if it exist) is presumably to be gathered from the occasion. Luke 22^{15} expressly reports our Lord as saying, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer"; and Paul, in exhorting the Corinthians to rid themselves of the old leaven of corruption, says (1 Cor. 5^{7}), in thorough harmony with this view: "For our passover (*i.e.* paschal lamb) also hath been sacrificed, even Christ."

The paschal lamb was annually slain and eaten in memory of the people's deliverance from Egypt.[4] Its blood had primarily no cleansing efficacy, but was sprinkled on the side-posts and the lintel of the door of an Israelite's dwelling, as a token by which it might be recognized and 'passed over' in the visitation of destruction that was to come upon the Egyptians.

The Eucharist, however, was not an annual but a weekly, often a daily, observance with the early Christians.[5] Still, it accords with this association of the Lord's Supper with the Passover, that two of the four accounts of it which the New Testament gives, or — should Luke's be discarded as merely the echo of Paul's — the Apostle Paul, by his (1 Cor. 11^{24}) "this do in remembrance of me," and again (vs.[25]), "this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me," recognizes distinctly its memorial character, agreeably to the command above referred to, "This day shall be unto you for a memorial."[6]

6. Yet two of the Evangelists certainly — possibly three (Lk. 22^{20})

[4] Ex. 12^{14} 13^{9} Deut. 16^{3}.

[5] See Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Bk. xv., ch. ix.

[6] Many recent investigators — as Jülicher, Spitta, Haupt, Grafe, McGiffert, and even Lobstein (see Hoffmann, *Abendmahlsgedanken*, p. 75 n.) — are inclined to question the relationship of the Eucharist to the Passover.

— ascribe to Jesus the words, "this is my blood of the covenant" (Mk. 14^{24} Mt. 26^{28}), "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk. 22^{20}) — an evident allusion to the consecration of the "Book of the Covenant" (as narrated in Ex. $24^{6\,ff.}$), and an acknowledged appropriation of the 'new covenant' foretold in Jeremiah (31^{31-33}): "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it," etc. This historical correspondence is followed out at length in the 9th and 10th chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf. 13^{20}).

But in this case, again, there is no suggestion of 'drinking.' "The blood of the covenant" was sprinkled upon "the book itself and all the people" (Heb. 9^{19}) as a ceremony of consecration (vs.$^{18-22}$). Its 'cleansing' efficacy (on which the New Testament author lays stress) (vs.^{23}; cf. $^{13.\,14}$) forms an easy transition to the sacrificial interpretation of our Lord's language, agreeably to the close of the prophet's description of the covenant (vs.^{34}), "they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." This sacrificial conception is hinted at in the words with which, according to the Evangelists, Christ follows his mention of blood, viz. "which is shed for many"; and it is made indubitable in Matthew by the addition, "unto remission of sins."

This addition by Matthew, which sets the rite distinctly in a sacrificial light, finds its warrant in Christ's own declaration (as reported by both Matthew and Mark), "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many." And the frequency with which this view recurs in the apostolic writings we hardly need call to mind by such quotations as: "There is one mediator, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2^{6}), "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Tit. 2^{14}), "knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold . . . but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. $1^{18\,f.}$), "who was delivered up for our trespasses" (Rom. 4^{25}), "gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1^{4}), "loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2^{20}), *i.e.* — as he himself says in the Fourth Gospel (10^{15}) — "I lay down my life for the sheep."

7. But besides the interpretations of the Eucharist for which the Apostle Paul has already been adduced as sponsor, we find in the 10th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians another which is of

quite a different cast: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of [margin, "participation in"] the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we who are many are one bread [or 'loaf'], one body: for we all partake of the one bread." This interpretation of the rite is, I believe, quite without analogy in the New Testament. The earliest extant approach to it seems to be found in the prayer associated with the ordinance in the 9th chapter of the "Teaching of the Apostles," where we read, "As this broken bread was scattered abroad [*i.e.* in the form of grain] over the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom."[7]

II. These may serve as specimens of the perplexities which swarm about a rite which, to average Christian thought, seems as simple as the narrative of its institution given in the Gospels is brief. It will be noticed that they group themselves in the main about two points, viz., the origin of the observance, and its significance. A few words of comment upon them in their relation to each of these points may not be out of place.

1. The scholars who have maintained that the observance did not originate with Jesus are very few. From the time of Paulus to the present they can be counted, I believe, on the fingers of one hand. Renan[8] goes so far as to hold that the sacred formulary was employed by Jesus in his everyday meals (p. 314) with his disciples, in order to remind them that he was their nourisher in the highest sense; and afterward this, the ordinary, usage was affectionately summed up by them and solemnly associated with his death.[9]

[7] But many scholars are inclined to doubt whether the prayers in the "Teaching," ch. ix., x., refer to the Eucharist, and to restrict them to the agape which preceded the 'sacrament' proper; note the "filled" at the beginning of ch. x. and the "let him come" at its close. The eucharistic reference is adopted, to be sure, in the *Constitt. Apostolorum*, 7, 26 (p. 209 ed. Lagarde); but Zahn (*Forschungen*, u. s. w., iii. 293–302) gives strong reasons for distrusting it. And this opinion is held or favored by Weizsäcker (*Apost. Zeitalter*, 602), Achelis (in Spitta, 250, n. 2), Haupt (*Prog.* 27), Loofs, R. E.[3] i. 39, Allen (*Christian Institutions*, 518); cf. also C. Taylor (*The Teaching*, etc., 1886, p. 77).

[8] *Vie de Jésus*, 14th ed., p. 312 *sq.*, 399 *sqq.*

[9] Similarly, Professor McGiffert extends the usage: "That the [primitive] disciples held a special service and partook of a special communion meal there is no sign . . . whenever they ate together they ate the Lord's Supper . . . they partook of no ordinary meal . . . that was not a κυριακὸν δεῖπνον." *Apostolic Age*, p. 69 f. See also Norman Fox, *Christ in the Daily Meal.*

But the denial that Christ originated the meal attracted a momentary attention in English-speaking circles a few years ago because it found advocacy in a pamphlet by Professor Percy Gardner of Oxford (Macmillan, 1893). Mr. Gardner thinks that the idea of the observance originated with Paul himself in one of his ecstatic moods, and was suggested by the Greek mysteries with which the apostle came in contact on taking up his temporary residence in Corinth. To make room for this theory, he clears the ground of all but one of the four Biblical accounts of the origin of the rite, by applying the maxim (a strange procedure on the part of a professional student of history) that coincidences must be reckoned as merely the echoes of a single account, and that divergent accounts invalidate one another. By this process he reduces the four stories to one, for which Paul is the sole independent voucher, so that, "apart from the Corinthian Epistle there is no Biblical evidence of the institution of the Lord's Supper at all" (p. 14). The Apostle's statement, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," etc., he understands (slightly against the philological probabilities of the case; yet cf. Hoffmann, p. 32 *sq.*) as a claim to knowledge acquired, not through the medium of the Apostles who were personal companions of our Lord, — which, of course, would be fatal to the theory by carrying the observance back a score of years, — but by direct revelation.[10] This present personal revelation the Apostle mistakes for a past fact.

By this interpretation Mr. Gardner not only overlooks the circumstance that he represents Paul as in this instance, contrary to his wont, failing to discriminate between his ordinary and his ecstatic or hypnotic state, but that he postulates a revelation clothed in precise language.[11] Moreover, granted that the rite originated thus in a double or confused mental state of the Apostle, how came it to be universally accepted and invested with special sanctity, without the slightest extant trace of hesitation or dissent? How came it to establish itself at once in churches of all shades of opinion, as well those of so-called 'Petrine' origin and sympathy as those loyal to the

[10] Of course Professor Gardner's position precludes the strong objection arising from the unreasonableness of assuming a miraculous communication to Paul of information which was obtainable from any one of those who were in Christ before him. Weiss, who agrees with Professor Gardner in thinking Paul to claim a special revelation on the subject, makes that revelation cover "not the mere historical data . . . but their significance," and the duty of repeating the observance. (Weiss, *Leben Jesu*[2], 498, note; *Bibl. Theol.* § 85 *b.*)

[11] Such instances as Acts 9^{11} 18^{9} 27^{24} will hardly be thought to be analogous.

Apostle to the Gentiles, — in Palestine, Asia, Africa, Rome? And that, although Paul, its author, himself gives several variant interpretations of it, even directly after its birth in Corinth, — making it now a memorial rite, now a covenant, now expiatory, now a passover, — and all the while so thoroughly dissociates it from the Eleusinian mysteries which are assumed to have suggested it,[12] that not even the name "mystery" is applied to it till generations afterward,[13] which would hardly have been the case had the new rite been a substitute with the Corinthian converts for the revered heathen ceremonies. But we need not linger upon Mr. Gardner's unsolved problems; for his theory has found acceptance, so far as I can learn, with almost no one but its author.[14]

His essay, however, marks an interesting stage in the discussion; for he has had the perspicacity to perceive that the impeachment of the Evangelists' accounts to be successful must be thorough, and leave not so much as a historic kernel — a conclusion in which some of the more far-sighted continental critics, like Brandt ('93) and Eichhorn ('98) are beginning to follow him.

As to the support which the assumed incompatibility between the establishment of anything like a rite by Jesus and his well-known views is thought to receive from a depreciatory treatment of the rite of baptism, its slenderness will be evident to any one who runs his eye over the frequent and varied references to this latter rite which the New Testament contains. Not only was it confessedly brought over with them by some of the Baptist's disciples, who, after becoming Christ's followers, still continued to employ it as a symbol of initiation into the new faith; but, as such, it appears all along in the history of the early Church: the three thousand who were in this mode added to the Church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2^{41}), and the twelve disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19^{1-7}) who were rebaptized that they might receive the Holy Spirit, — its seal as a distinctively Chris-

[12] "It is precisely in the manner of St. Paul that he should long to turn a pagan ceremony to Christian use, or as he would have said, 'from the service of devils to that of God,'" p. 18. Later, however, Professor Gardner says (p. 20), "The Pauline origin seems to rest on definite facts, the Eleusinian suggestion to be merely a probability."

[13] See Suicer, *Thesaurus*, etc., ii. 383.

[14] Yet Professor McGiffert says (*Apostolic Age*, p. 538), "Though the Lord's Supper was everywhere eaten by Christian disciples before Paul, it may be said in a certain sense that it was established by him; for it was he, so far as our sources enable us to judge, who first made it a special meal, and separated from all others." Professor Pfleiderer is also reported to have substantially accepted Professor Gardner's view.

tian ordinance, — are only representative witnesses. Still more noteworthy is the circumstance that Paul, in running a parallel between the adherents of the new dispensation and the old, speaks of the latter as "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"; and Peter (1 Pet. 3^{20}) finds its antitype in the ark of Noah "wherein few, that is eight, souls were saved through water: which (he adds) after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism," etc. Now such far-fetched typology as this could hardly be employed in reference to a ceremony newly introduced or resting on a precarious foundation.

But it is unnecessary to dwell on this point further, especially as the various meanings with which the rite is freighted by the New Testament writers we shall have occasion to glance at in another connection. Suffice it to say that the apparent slights mentioned as here and there put upon it cannot overthrow its claim to have been the introductory symbol of Christian discipleship from the very first, but must find — as they do — their easy explanation on grounds which we cannot now turn aside to consider.

2. But though the number of those who plumply deny that Jesus originated the Eucharistic meal is small, there are not a few scholars who are inclined to doubt wheth he intended to establish a permanent usage or prescribe an ordinance. The opinions of this intermediate group of critics appear in their extreme form in the view of Renan as just now cited. Amid many minor differences, they concur in regarding the act of our Lord — which they think may have been quite unpremeditated — as designed to symbolize to his followers their vital spiritual dependence on him.

Want of time forbids us to detail the various ways in which these critics soften down their deviations from the more common opinion. But it must suffice to say that such scholars as Jülicher, Spitta, Weiss, Briggs,[15] and — not to mention minor names — even Luther[16] himself, as it seems, may be fairly included in the class.[17]

[15] Dr. Briggs seems disposed to agree with Weiss (*Leben Jesu*[2], 1884, Vol. ii. 498, note, 614) that the perpetual observance of the rite is due to disclosures made by our Lord after his resurrection. See his *Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 123.

[16] "The first bondage of this sacrament is as regards its substance or completeness, which the tyranny of Rome has wrested from us [by denying reception in both kinds to the laity]. Not that they sin against Christ who use one kind only, since Christ has not commanded the use of any, but has left it to the choice of each individual, saying, 'This do ye, as oft as ye shall do it, in remembrance of me.'" Wace and Buchheim, *Luther's Primary Works* (Lond., 1896), p. 309. See Hoffmann, *u. s.*, p. 99, to whom I am indebted for the fact.

[17] Cf. Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* i. 304, n. 3.

It may be remembered, too, that Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the sermon which he preached on this topic to the Second Church in Boston, and in which he made his peculiar views the reason for resigning the pastorate (*Works* xi. 29), declared that, while he accepted the Biblical accounts, he 'could not believe that Jesus meant to impose a memorial feast upon the whole world' (*ib.*, p. 10), but that the observance of the Supper as an ordinance rests upon the questionable authority of St. Paul (pp. 19, 20 bottom).

III. But some of these theories about the origin of the rite have already involved us in considerations respecting its significance, with which they are inextricably intertwined. So that we may properly turn our attention now directly to this latter point.

1. We need not linger long on the petty criticisms which rest on the want of correspondence in details between type and antitype, — as that the Passover was celebrated annually; that neither its blood nor that of sacrifices was partaken of; that at the crucifixion there was no profuse shedding of blood, whereas in the epistles allusions to the 'body' of Christ are rare, while mention of his blood is frequent.

This last fact, indeed, is noteworthy. No doubt the red wine, or mixture of wine and water (which formed the contents of the cup at this meal), suggested our Lord's imagery. But there is slight Biblical warrant for the hideous conception of 'drinking blood.' It is the 'shedding,' not the drinking, of the blood that Jesus emphasizes: "This is my covenant blood that is poured out on behalf of many." In both Mark and Matthew, too, the 'drinking' immediately follows the 'giving of thanks,' and precedes the declaration, "This is my blood of the covenant." Especially noteworthy is the easy transition of thought from the wine as symbolizing the 'blood,' to the blood as betokening the 'covenant.' 'Blood' is made so prominent in apostolic thought, because the concrete symbol — the wine of the cup — is lost in its significance. The Jewish ritual had made 'blood' suggestive of sacrifice (Lev. 17^{11}). It is this sacrificial significance, and not the actual circumstances of the death, which originated such expressions as "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." And the warrant for this sacrificial view of his death we have already found in Christ's own words.

2. Again, to bring forward as an objection to the statement, "This is my body broken for you," the fact that the body was not literally broken, seems like cavilling.

The flexible — or, if you prefer, vibratory — character of symbolic language in Jewish usage is illustrated in this very case, by the fact

that, after the Eucharistic meal resting on that language had been a Christian usage for a generation, the Apostle John can find a fulfilment of Scripture in the circumstance that "not a bone of him was broken." Another illustration of this plastic style of speech is furnished by Paul's statement (1 Cor. 10) that the 'fathers' "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"; although, as matter of fact, they were not, so far as we know, so much as besprinkled by cloud or sea; — 'but they might have been' is the naive remark of a modern commentator.

3. Two other points in the criticisms that have been brought forward deserve a word of comment. First, that the rite involves the later theological conceptions of Paul and John, and so cannot reasonably be ascribed to Jesus. But how if those theological conceptions prove — as they claim — to be but the unfolding of truths which the teaching of Jesus contained in the germ? The utterance of truths the full scope of which could only become evident later, was an acknowledged characteristic of Jesus as a teacher; and once and again in the Gospels the disciples confess that they did not understand him at the time. Congruously enough, therefore, does the lamented Weizsäcker call our Lord's procedure at the supper a "Parable in Act," a parable for the interpretation of which he left his disciples to the teaching of experience.

4. The second objection — that the rite implies a clear foresight on the part of Jesus of the fact and mode of his death, and its ultimate effect upon his followers and the world — is undeniable, so far as concerns the implication. If in this respect it stood wholly by itself, without parallel or corroboration, some misgiving concerning it might be pardonable. But such an assumption falsifies the records: recall the six accounts of the three separate occasions on which he is represented as explicitly foretelling his fate; recall the five instances in which, on at least three different times, he is reported to have bidden every one that would follow him to take up his cross; remember his answer to the inquiry about fasting — "the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day"; picture again the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, — as marvellous in its significance as it is delicate in delineation, — where Moses and Elijah spake of his decease which was to be accomplished in Jerusalem; consider the treatment of the "one beloved son" (Mk. 12) in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen; call to mind his chilling reply to the ambitious brothers: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be

baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" the compression of soul that forces from him the ejaculation, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" his likening of his end to that of Jonah in the Old Testament story, and that which the Baptist had but recently met (Mt. 17^{12}); the amazement and fear that took hold of the disciples as "Jesus went before them" (Mk. 10^{32}); his sad confession (Lk. 13^{33}), "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem"; his pathetic outburst, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" In short, read any one of the Gospels, and see what a torso it becomes on the supposition that the references to the crucifixion are afterthoughts that have been crowded back into the story. Assert, if you will, that such language as this (Mt. $20^{18.19}$) — "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up," shows by the definiteness of its details that it was written after the event. That matters little. For the question relates not to the details of the record, but to the massive facts of the history.

And that his death would not permanently disperse his followers and end his sway over them, — whatever its immediate effect might be upon their actions or their mood, — he proves himself once and again to be well assured of: by promising them regnant power over the spiritual tribes yet to be gathered; by authorizing them to 'bind and loose,' 'remit and retain,' in his name; by giving them precepts to regulate their mutual relations after he should have left them; by speaking of them as a "church" to be founded on the foremost apostle; nay, in the very words that accompanied the ceremony we are considering, does he not say that his blood is "shed" — not merely for the little group about the table but — "for many"? that it is the blood of a new covenant, a phrase which of necessity implies a new covenant people — a קָהָל.

IV. But it is time for us to gather up some of the results reached by these discussions.

1. It should be noted, in the first place, that we nowhere have a detailed history of the rite or exposition of its meaning. The earliest record of it in narrative form, — that given in the Synoptic Gospels, — is contained in two or three verses, and scarcely goes beyond 'the words of institution,' as they are styled. Criticism finds no room

for itself. The narrative is reduced to its lowest terms. An attempt to strip anything off as a foreign accretion would leave hardly so much as the skeleton of a thought. To be sure, the appended words in Matthew, "unto remission of sins," were not improbably added by that Evangelist as expressing his interpretation of the "blood of the covenant"; an interpretation which, as we have seen, involves a truth explicitly stated by Jesus elsewhere in this Gospel as well as in Mark. The only valid objection to them gets its force by first loading them down with a meaning imported from some mediaeval or modern theological theory about sin and its forgiveness, for which its authors and advocates must be held responsible, not the New Testament.

Further, there is evidently some confusion in the text of Luke's account; confusion which the critics are not yet agreed as to the mode of clearing up. The problem is embarrassed by his anticipatory reference to the cup. This has led certain readers to think that he speaks of two separate cups. But the twofold mention may be attributable merely to his resumptive or recapitulatory propensity as a writer — a characteristic exemplified notably by his twofold account of the Ascension. Or possibly the first cup may be a relic of the Paschal meal, and only the second Eucharistic.

He varies from the other two Evangelists also in the order of mentioning the cup and the bread; but that no more impairs his testimony to the substantial facts than his similar deviation as respects our Lord's temptations, or the exposure of the traitor (Lk. 22^{21-23}, but the 'institution' vs. $^{15-20}$). In fact, Paul himself once reverses the order in the same way (1 Cor. 10^{16}). The like indifference to order reappears in the 'Teaching.' Naturally the repetition of the observance soon established a uniformity of sequence even in speech. But sequence in such a case does not affect historicity.

2. In the second place, most of our knowledge about the primitive observance of the rite we get from Paul. Yet notice, he does not undertake to give us a history of it, much as he may at first seem to, and is sometimes carelessly said to. He is not intent on making a record of just what occurred as it occurred, nor is he laying down what might be called a 'doctrine' of the Eucharist. An examination of what he says, particularly in 1 Cor. 11, where he speaks most explicitly, will show that he is reproving the gross irregularities which had crept into the observance at Corinth. What we learn from him, therefore, about the rite itself we learn incidentally and by inference. It was the custom of that church, apparently, to hold a special meet-

ing for the celebration (vs. [20.33]), and in connection with it to eat the 'agape,' or fraternal meal [18] — a practice which was kept up at least in certain churches into the second century. The materials for the meal — including 'the sacred elements,' as it has become the practice to call them — seem to have been provided by the contributions in kind of the members on each occasion; and as a consequence cliques had sprung up; and instead of waiting for one another and partaking simultaneously (vs. [21.33]), each looked out for himself; with the result that one (a poor man, or a late comer) was hungry, while another carried his excess to drunkenness. In rebuking this unseemliness the Apostle admonishes them that such a supper is not the Lord's Supper; that *he* received (the emphasis lies on the pronoun) a very different observance, and gave such to them — an observance of the most reverent character and most devout associations; for it was instituted by our Lord himself at a most momentous season, namely, the night in which he was betrayed; that all its suggestions cluster about and spring from that solemn hour; that it is a perpetual reminder of their crucified Redeemer; that in every celebration of it they are proclaiming his death, and will continue to do so to the end. Take heed, therefore (he says in substance), that your manner of commemorating the event be worthy of its dignity and its sanctity.

3. In the third place, all the references to the rite in the Acts and Epistles indicate that it was already an established usage. The three thousand added to the church on the day of Pentecost "continued" (we are told) "in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2^{42}). This phrase 'the breaking of bread' became the technical term for the rite, or for the common meal whose central and culminating point it describes. So early at least as the 'Teaching' (ix. 4) the 'bread' is called simply κλᾶσμα. Although it was at Troas, "on the first day of the week when the disciples were gathered together to break bread" (Acts 20^{7}), that we have the only recorded instance of Paul's personal participation in the observance, yet his language in writing to the Corinthians implies its habitualness: "the cup of blessing which we bless" (*i.e.* are in the habit of blessing), "the bread which we break" (1 Cor. 10^{16}); "as often as ye drink this cup . . . as often as ye eat this bread" (1 Cor. $11^{25.26}$). And his allusion to receiving the rite "of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11^{23}), if, as is not improbable, it makes reference to his interviews with the earlier Apostles on his visit to Jerusalem (of

[18] This is denied by Jülicher, *u. s.*, p. 232 *sq.* See Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 517 *sqq.*

which he speaks in Gal. $1^{18 ff.}$), carries back the observance a score of years behind the date at which he writes, and makes those Apostles attest it within a few years of Christ's death.

In short, all the extant indications corroborate the belief that the rite (1) originated with Jesus; (2) was intended for the church at large; (3) was consequently to be repeated; and (4) that this was the opinion and practice of the whole group of his most intimate personal associates.

V. If these results are valid, it becomes an interesting question: What is the intrinsic meaning of the ordinance, and the true attitude for us to hold towards it?

1. Here we come upon a most important suggestion respecting the proper understanding and use of Scripture.

The modern views differ widely from one another, as we have seen. But, apart from the one or two isolated interpretations which sever the rite from the thought of Christ's death, they concur in grouping themselves about the crucifixion. For the most part, however, each confines itself to but a single aspect of that great central fact. For one interpreter, the rite is commemorative: "This do in remembrance of me." To another, it is symbolic, a token of fellowship through 'commensality' (to use a word which Robertson Smith has revived); the thought is unfolded in Paul's comparison of the rite to the Jewish and Gentile sacrificial meals: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." A third insists that the rite is simply piacular and expiatory: "I delivered unto you, first of all, what also I received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." A fourth finds its central idea in the Covenant: "This cup is the new covenant." To a fifth, it is simply the Christian's passover: "Purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness; for our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." Yet another finds its secret hidden in the mystic sense of incorporation: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him."

Now, I venture to think that these diverse theories are all partly right and wholly wrong, if the paradox may be pardoned. Each embodies a truth, but not the whole truth. The trouble with them is that they are one-eyed. Their advocates are disposed to assume each that because his interpretation is correct, the others are erroneous. They quite overlook the many-sidedness of Scripture, the elasticity and power of self-adaptation inherent in the Christian faith.

A strange oversight this in the present case, because the Biblical vouchers for all the interpretations just adduced (except perhaps one) have been drawn from the writings of one and the same apostle. The exception referred to is the idea of mystic incorporation, as set forth in the sixth chapter of John. But even this idea of corporate unity also finds distinct recognition by Paul: "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of (or, according to the alternate rendering, 'participation in') the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread (or, 'loaf'), one body; for we all partake of the one bread."

This quality of pliancy (if I may so call it) in Biblical thought, this power of adjusting itself to the various and varying needs of men, is so noteworthy, and its recognition so important for the right understanding and use of Scripture, — while, on the other hand, it is so apt to be obscured by erroneous views of inspiration and the hard and fast senses insisted on by theologians in search of what are called "proof-texts," — that I must beg leave to linger on it a moment. It is illustrated by the five or six different lights in which the simple historic fact of Christ's death is placed. Now, it is a mere deed of violence: "whom [the Jews] slew, by hanging him on a tree" (Acts 10^{39}); now, the fulfilment of a divine purpose: "him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye ... did crucify and slay" (Acts 2^{23}); now, an act of voluntary self-surrender: "No one taketh my life away from me, but I lay it down of myself" (Jn. 10^{18}); now, God's public vindication of his rectoral righteousness: "whom God set forth ... in his blood to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime" (Rom. 3^{25}); now, the necessary fulfilment of prophecy: "all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me" (Lk. 24^{44}; cf. Mt. $26^{53\,f.}$ Lk. 22^{37}); now, the prerequisite to helpful service: "it became him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2^{10}).

In further illustration of this many-sidedness of Scripture, this flexibility and self-adjusting power of Biblical truth, let me recall the rite of baptism, according to my promise (p. 118). Often that rite is simply initiatory, as all admit. Again, it is significant of loyalty: "our fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10^{2}); *i.e.* as Ex. 14^{31} tells us, after going through the sea on dry land, "the people believed in the Lord and in his servant

Moses." Again, it appears as the condition precedent to the reception of the Spirit: after the converts in Samaria had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, the Apostles "laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts $8^{16.17}$). Further, it is represented as having unifying power: "in one spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12^{13}). At one time, it symbolizes the extinction of one's past moral being: "all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death; we were buried . . . with him through baptism into death' (Rom. $6^{3f.}$). At another, it is the presage and dawn of the recipient's consummation: "as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3^{27}).

Or take the threefold interpretation of the utterance of Jesus at the cleansing of the temple, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2^{19}): — understood now materially, as referring to the edifice in which the words were spoken (Mk. 14^{58}); now typically, to "the temple of his body" (vs.^{21}); now ideally, to that temple of the saints who are "builded together in him for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2^{22}; cf. 1 Cor. 3^{17} 2 Cor. 6^{16}).

Or again, the twofold explanation of the term "Son of God" in its application to Jesus: — as due, on the one hand, to his divine parentage (Lk. 1^{35}); on the other, to the indwelling of the divine Logos (Jn. 1^{18}); to say nothing of the term's currency as expressive of Messianic dignity (Jn. $1^{34.49}$), and in a metaphysical sense (Rom. 1^{4} Gal. 4^{4} Heb. $1^{2.5.8}$, etc.).

But, without multiplying illustrations, let us never forget that the New Testament is not, primarily at least, history, much less is it theology, with its petrified inflexibility of definition and statement; but it is a book of religion, a book in which the presentation of truth is affected by the faith and the needs of the several writers and their readers. But diversity of presentation no more invalidates the substantial kernel of underlying fact in an epistle, than it does in a modern sermon.

2. Our topic has a suggestion for criticism also.

a. One of the rising scholars of Germany, who has given some special attention to our subject, on being asked when the present discussion was likely to end, gravely shook his head and answered, "The first thing to be done is to settle the text." With all deference to the author of this opinion, I think it must be pronounced a strange exaggeration.

The only variation of moment in our extant authorities affects the account in Luke; and of that we have already spoken. And even

after the rejection of the questionable words, his account is practically complete, and coincident with the other three: "And having received a cup he gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God have come. And having taken a loaf, after giving thanks he brake it and gave to them, saying, This is my body." No; criticism, as I have said, can hardly find a footing here. The notion that whatever is problematical or debatable about our subject will be lessened by microscopic scrutiny of the text, is a delusion. It assumes a literary or a mechanical relationship of our records which is quite at variance with the probable conditions of their origin. It disregards the free intercourse, the uncalculating, actual, earnest, religious life from which those records sprung. It magnifies the words by looking at them in the light of the world-wide struggles of which they have been made the arena. It isolates them and makes them an exception to the free general tenor of the Gospel narratives; mistaking modern interests for ancient, it transforms the palpitating preacher into a cold-blooded historical and textual critic. It is no more likely that the primitive believers discovered discrepancies and perplexities in the statements relating to the Lord's Supper, than that the plain unbiassed Christian does at the present day. The untrammelled freedom with which the accounts were read and used is illustrated by the fact that in some of the early liturgies and in the *Apost. Const.* (8, 12, 16; 7, 25, 1), the words of the Apostle are put into the mouth of the Saviour himself: "As often as ye eat this bread, etc., ye proclaim my death, until I come" (Resch, *Agrapha*, 105 *sq.*; cf. 284).[19]

b. Our subject has a word of caution also for the 'higher' as well as for the textual critic. 'Higher criticism,' indeed, in the sense in which that term is current, viz., as describing the process of analyzing, classifying, and tracing to their respective authors and periods, the contents of composite literary productions, finds in the New Testament — with the exception in some measure of the Synoptic Gospels — an extremely restricted field. For the New Testament is not made up, like the Old, of writings composed, many of them, hundreds of years before they assumed the form in which we have them, — writings bearing indisputable internal evidence of adaptation to the changing conditions of a people, whose orderly development was

[19] The divergencies in the three accounts of Paul's conversion given in the Acts are a demonstration — if any be needed — of the small importance attached in New Testament times to petty details.

interrupted again and again by civil strife and foreign war, who were peeled, deported, and their land laid waste repeatedly with fire and sword, and whose literature must have shared to some extent the national fortunes, — but it is the product in the main of a single generation, nearly one quarter of it coming from the pen of a single man, whose most important Epistles were written hardly twenty-five years after the death of the founder of Christianity, and who expressly directed at least two of the churches he addressed to exchange with one another the Epistles received from him — a practice which would both tend to preclude material alteration, and to perpetuate a record of it, if made. The few apparently heterogeneous insertions and disjointed combinations which his writings exhibit ought not, I think, to surprise any one in letters composed for the most part hastily, to meet pressing exigencies, by a mind full to overflowing, impetuous, and dictating its thoughts (as we know Paul did) to an amanuensis.

Nevertheless, in the face of these facts, one critic at least, among those disposed to question the opinion that Jesus himself established our rite, thinks it to be a compound the several elements of which can be traced to their respective sources: the sacrificial are thought to be of Jewish origin; the 'sacramental' and 'mysterious,' Greek; the idea of incorporation, Gnostic.

Now, the affinity more or less close of the New Testament presentations with these several types of thought need not be denied. Even the use of the epithet 'Gnostic' seems to involve no anachronism; for it is apparently pretty well settled that there existed a species of pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism.[20]

But let any one try to think out for himself the process of amalgamating these geographically separated and in some respects diverse conceptions into one, and the embodiment of that composite result in a rite so simple and bold as that portrayed in the New Testament, and the reception of that rite within a generation, without a known trace of dissent, by the scattered groups of believers in every land — Greece, Italy, Asia Minor, Palestine — let, I say, a person seriously make this experiment, and he will convince himself how much simpler history is than speculation. One of the first lessons in criticism is the truth that often a deep chasm separates what is possible from what is probable.

3. Again, this rite exemplifies what I will venture to call the solidarity of the New Testament. The Book's contents illustrate and

[20] See the work of M. Friedländer, *Der vorchristl. jüdische Gnosticismus*, Göttingen, 1898.

uphold one another in unexpected ways. Here is a little passage, only two or three verses in compass, stating in language as simple as it is surprising, an incident — we might almost say an interruption — in a meal the ritual of which was elaborate and prescribed, a meal the participants in which knew that they were eating together for the last time, a meal preceded (as many think) by the selfish wrangle of the disciples about places, a meal made memorable by the Master's condescension to a menial office, by the appalling exposure of the traitor, by the tender discourse culminating in prayer to which the Fourth Gospel devotes more than four chapters; here in this little passage — this fragment, as it were, of Scripture — we have a statement made without preface and left without comment, before which many a reader, as we have seen, at first stands baffled.

But when pondered, when scrutinized in its relations to the speaker, the hearers, the occasion, it is discovered to have connections, subtile but indisputable, reaching back through the centuries to the very birthday of God's chosen nation, and forward to the triumphal consummation of his earthly kingdom. Instead of standing there in its isolation, bold almost to repulsiveness, it discloses analogies with current beliefs, recalls national usages, gathers up into itself scattered reminiscences, till it becomes a kind of epitome of prophetic pre-intimations, a summary of apostolic experience and hope, a focal point in the career of Him who is the Light of the World.

The feast which accompanied a sacrifice bound the worshippers together — as Paul reminds us — not merely with one another (1 Cor. 12^{27}), but with the object of their worship (1 Cor. $10^{16.18-21}$). After the analogy of the thought drawn out so fully in the 6th of John, eating and drinking, as symbolizing fellowship and enjoyment, appear in the later Old Testament books: "Come eat ye of my bread," says Wisdom in the Proverbs (9^{5}), "and drink of the wine which I have mingled." And again in Ecclesiasticus (24^{21}): "They that eat me shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty." And even to Hillel is ascribed the saying, "There will be no Messiah for Israel, for they ate him up in the days of Hezekiah"[21] It was the practice among the Jews, as among many other nations, to mark a season of mourning by the use of special food — the 'bread of mourning and the cup of consolation,' as it is called in the prophets.[22] And though the asking of a blessing at meals seems to have been practised at least from Samuel's day (1 Sam. 9^{13}), and in

[21] See Wetstein on Jn. 6^{51}. [22] Jer. 16^{7} Ezek. 24^{17} Hos. 9^{4}.

later Jewish usage was required even where only three ate together, yet the reiterated mention of our Lord's 'giving of thanks' at the breaking of bread favors the conjecture that the familiar act took on in his case some characteristic which emphasized and fastened it in their thought. Witness the feeding of the five thousand (Mt. 14^{19} Lk. 9^{16} Jn. $6^{11\text{-}13.\ 23}$), of the four thousand (Mt. 15^{36} Mk. $8^{6.\ 7}$), and the meal at Emmaus, where he became known to the two as he blessed and brake the bread (Lk. $24^{30.\ 35}$); and all the more noteworthy is this last instance, because the two, not being of the number of the Twelve (Lk. 24^{33}), were not present at the sacramental meal.

How many memories and thoughts like these grouped themselves about our Lord's institution of the Supper we cannot tell. Only scattered and fragmentary traces of them can be detected in our extant Scriptures. That the Christian rite should take up into itself something from these antecedent faiths and usages is as natural as that Paul should make the inscription "to an unknown God" the basis for an exposition of Christian theism. But even so, as we dwell upon the ordinance in its literary and historic relations we shall begin to discern its strategic significance and its power; we shall understand how it could rob for the disciples their Master's death of its horror and disappointment, and make it the transition to a higher activity on his part and a more spiritual faith on theirs. We shall be disposed, I think, to concur in the judgment of the cautious Holtzmann: "The words 'Do this in remembrance of me' perhaps were not spoken; but only the more surely do they utter what lay in the occasion, and made itself current with unforced correctness of sequence." (*N. T. Theol.* i. 304.)

4. Further, our subject exhibits the profound wisdom of Jesus as respects the matter of rites.

No reader of the Gospel can doubt that Jesus intended to gather about him a self-perpetuating company of disciples — in other words, to establish a church on earth. But he has nowhere set forth anything approximating to a form of organization for that church, and only once or twice laid down a principle which should govern its members in their intercourse with one another and the world.[23] Notwithstanding his prediction that adherents should come into his kingdom from the four quarters of the globe, even to the exclusion of those who were born to citizenship in it, and the direct command to the eleven to "make disciples of all the nations" which, after his resurrection, Matthew puts into his mouth, he is content to leave them

[23] Mt. 18^{17} $20^{25\ sq.}$ $23^{8\ sq.}$.

to the slow teaching of experience. And it is nearly twenty years after his departure before even a Peter, under the coöperating influences of the Providence and Spirit of God, comes to perceive that "God is no respecter of persons," and gradually brings himself to join with Paul and James in a somewhat qualified public avowal of the co-equality of all believers. Thus is the Jewish nest emptied only by the patient hatching of its eggs.

The like wise reserve reappears in his utterances respecting the two ordinances which his Church has observed through the generations: the disciples are bidden to "baptize"; but nowhere does he give explicit directions respecting the subjects, the mode, the place, or the ministrant of the rite; nowhere is any formulary prescribed for its administration; while the recorded instances in the Acts, the language of the Epistles to the Hebrews (10^{22}) and to Titus (3^{5}) — to say nothing of the hardly intelligible phrase in the first Epistle of Peter (3^{21}) — seem to show that in practice it was varied according to the varying needs and usages of localities and persons.

Similar elasticity and diversity characterize, as we have seen, apostolic speech, and apparently practice, respecting the rite on which we have been dwelling. The critics falter in their attempts to discover some trace of an established formulary in its administration, common as its observance indisputably was, at least in Corinth. The addition in the early centuries of other articles of food — such as honey, cheese, salt — to those employed in its first observance, and even the substitution in ascetic circles of water for the (mixed) wine of the cup, attest the flexibility and freedom of early belief and practice. Indeed, it seems as though Infinite Wisdom had done its utmost to preclude and to thwart the ingrained propensity of men to paralyze life by routine, to petrify words throbbing with the most tender and sacred suggestions into hackneyed formalism.